and the salt thereof, wherein

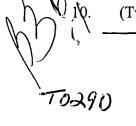
- M is a hydrogen atom, an ammonium ion, a monovalent metal ion or an equivalent of a divalent metal ion of the groups Ia, IIa, IIb, IVa or VIIIb of the Periodic Table of the Elements;
- R<sup>1</sup> is OH [or NR<sup>4</sup>R<sup>5</sup>, wherein R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> independently of one another are H or  $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl];
- $R^2$  is H or an alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group, wherein the alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, and aryl group are unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from  $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, OH, O- $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, halogen and CF<sub>3</sub>; and
- R<sup>3</sup> is COOM[, SO<sub>3</sub>M, COR<sup>4</sup>, CONR<sup>4</sup>R<sup>5</sup>] or COOR<sup>4</sup>; and [or
- R<sup>3</sup> is H, provided that when R<sup>3</sup> is H R<sup>2</sup> is unsubstituted aryl or aryl substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from  $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, OH, O- $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl, halogen and CF<sub>3</sub>.]

R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> independently of one another are H or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl.

(Twice Amended) The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein R<sup>3</sup> is COOM [or COOR<sup>4</sup>].

(Twice Amended) The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1, wherein

- M is an alkali metal ion or an equivalent of an alkaline earth metal ion or zinc ion; and
- [ $\mathbb{R}^1$  is OH or  $\mathbb{NH}_2$ ];
- R<sup>2</sup> is H or alkyl[; and
- $R^3$  is COOM or COOR<sup>4</sup>, wherein  $R^4$  is H or  $C_1$ - $C_6$ -alkyl].



(Twice Amended) A compound of the formulae:

